# White Paper Report

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Bilinguals in Late Mesopotamian Scholarship

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## Introduction

This report is intended to fulfill the requirements both of the final reporting for *Bilinguals in Late Mesopotamian Scholarship* and for the requirement to provide a public White Paper. In accordance with the recommended/allowable formats for the two reports, this document is written such that a single paper is suitable for both purposes.

## a. Project Activities

*Bilinguals in Late Mesopotamian Scholarship* (BLMS) was carried out as a collaboration of two teams, one at the University of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia, PA, and the other at the Free University of Berlin in Berlin, Germany. The deliverable is digital: a project on Oracc, the Open Richly Annotated Cuneiform Corpus (http://oracc.org) . BLMS had two major goals: to produce a catalog of bilingual texts from first millennium Mesopotamia, and to edit a large and representative sample of those texts.

The catalog is an essential part of any Oracc corpus project because all of the components of an edition are organized around the ID numbers utilized in the catalog. In addition, one of the project goals was to get a better quantitive sense of the extent of the late bilingual corpus and a variety of resources was used to collect this material: published lists of tablets of particular types such as the Ershahungas (a kind of liturgical lament); unpublished collections of notes from the files of Mark Geller, the Berlin PI; and a list of bilinguals in the Neo-Assyrian libraries of Kuyunjik which was provided by Jon Taylor of the British Museum. This last is particularly important because the Kuyunjik tablets are overwhelmingly the largest collection of materials for this project and even when the information on the Kuyunjik pieces is restricted to the observation that a fragment is bilingual this at least means that BLMS users will know which British Museum pieces are bilingual from among the 25,000 tablets and fragments of the Kuyunjik collection.

The Berlin team provided the catalog as specified and it is the basis of the project's website at http://oracc.org/blms/corpus.

Because the corpus described in this catalog was already known to be too large to edit within the project's funded time-frame, the immediate goals of the project were to edit substantial samples from the three broad categories of bilinguals: literary texts; incantations; and liturgical lamentations. In all categories, the project produced edited, translated, and lemmatized bodies of material.

The literary corpus—the smallest—was almost completely edited and includes the Ninurta hymns Angim dima and Lugale; Enlil and Sud; bilingual proverbs, and more.

The incantation corpus was represented primarily by the major series Udug-hul, "Evil Demons". This was a collaboration between the Berlin team and the Philadelphia team, and the Berlin team wisely invested a significant portion of their time reviewing all of the sources to ensure that the text editions were as accurate as possible.

The Berlin team supplied the Microsoft Word files of Udug-hul to the Philadelphia team in April 2014. The Philadelphia team is working on the data conversion and lemmatization at the time of writing this report.

An additional, smaller, group of incantations has also been included by the project in its corpus, a group of incantations against oaths.

Liturgical lamentations are represented by several major types of compositions. The project aimed in particular to produce online editions of the type called in Sumerian Er-sha-hunga or "heart-calming laments", intended to calm the heart of the angry god, and also of balags, or ritual lamentations associated with temple rebuilding and other rituals. The project edited, translated and lemmatized all of the Er-sha-hungas (about 150 in total) and substantial portions of the large balag

corpus, including almost all of the latest collection of liturgical bilinguals which come from Hellenistic Babylon.

## b. Accomplishments

The major qualitative goals of the project were met within the project time-frame. These were to create a catalog and representative text corpus of first millenium Mesopotamia bilingual texts, with glossaries suitable for further lemmatization within the genres covered by BLMS.  This is now available on Oracc as http://oracc.org/blms.

Work continues to meet one particular aspect of the quantitative goals,  namley the inclusion of the bilingual portions of the incantation series Udug-hul in the BLMS text-corpus.  Hiring considerations resulted in the Philadelphia team starting and finishing the bulk of its work earlier than the Berlin team, but work continues on the Udug-hul files supplied by the Berlin team and they will be processed during the summer of 2015 and included in the upcoming new version of the electronic Pennsylvania Sumerian Dictionary in fall 2015.

Work also continues on the portal pages that were planned for the project.  A full draft of the "Peoples Gods and Places" has been completed and the descriptive pages on bilingualism in late Mesopotamia and the various text genres will be completed using Penn research funds during 2015.

## c. Audiences

Because BLMS was only just made public at the time of writing this report, there is no quantitative data on its impact.

Qualitatively, however, BLMS texts will be included in the corpus used by the upcoming second major release of the electronic Pennsylvania Sumerian Dictionary, and will also be included in the initial release of Oracc Open Data which is being

developed as an open data set made available on Github which will offer freely available versions of all open text corpora, catalogs and glossaries on Oracc. In addition, BLMS texts will be included in the British Museum's Ashurbanipal project, also in preparation on Oracc, and will be placed on Github in the format we call C-ATF, the version of our plain text files which is used by the Cuneiform Digital Library Initiative.

## d. Evaluation

The project was not evaluated.

## e. Continuation of the Project

BLMS will continue indefinitely as a locus for the addition of further first millennium scholarly bilingual texts, as was the original intention of the project.

## f. Long Term Impact

The long term impact of the project will be substantial. Oracc is in the process of creating a new Akkadian dictionary based on all of its corpora, and BLMS will be utilized by this along with all of the other Akkadian corpora on the site. In addition, BLMS will be the most important supplier of Late Sumerian to the electronic Pennsylvania Sumerian Dictionary project, completing the Sumerian Dictionary's chronological coverage of the language down to some of the very latest examples of the use of Sumerian.

## g. Grant Products

BLMS was conceived and implemented as an online corpus project on the Oracc platform, and this is therefore the principal grant product. Because we will make the data freely available on Github the probability exists that further unanticipated grant products will also result from the work of the Berlin and Philadelphia teams.